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ABSTRACT

This Volunteer Literacy Manual is designed to facilitate the involvement of parents and community members as reading and writing partners with young children. The manual is not a training manual for the volunteer, but rather a manual to help organize the volunteer effort. It is intended to assist schools and community organizations in developing literacy programs and expanding existing ones; classroom teachers, Reading Recovery teachers, and other reading professionals are encouraged to think creatively about the ways in which volunteers can be engaged to help young students acquire the reading and writing skills that are so important in life. The manual is divided into the following sections: (1) Why Volunteers?; (2) Volunteer Roles; (3) Volunteer Recruitment; (4) Training and Retraining Volunteers; (5) Volunteer Recognition; (6) Risk Management; and (7) Selected Readings. A Resources Section (on paper and on 3.5 inch computer diskette) is included. (Contains 20 references.) (NKA)

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Volunteer Literacy Manual

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Introduction

The Reading Recovery Council of North America is a broad-based, non-profit organization whose members are dedicated to the vision that children will be proficient readers and writers by the end of first grade. In February 1997 the Council's Board of Directors adopted a commitment to support the President's Challenge for the youth of America. That commitment involves maintaining the quality of the Reading Recovery Program and involving parents and volunteers in supporting early literacy learning experiences.

Teachers, reading specialists, and other professionals are the cornerstone for teaching children to read and write. The work of trained volunteers does not replace professional efforts, particularly with children who are experiencing extreme difficulty in learning to read and write. Volunteers support classroom teaching by providing opportunities to increase children's practice of reading and writing.

Evidence from national studies shows that good readers and writers are children who have engaged in reading and writing activities over time – reading to parents or other supportive individuals, listening to stories being read, and writing words, notes, letters, and stories. This Volunteer Literacy Manual is designed to facilitate the involvement of parents and friends as reading and writing partners for young children.

This Manual is intended to support the Council's commitment to assisting schools and community organizations in developing literacy volunteer programs and expanding existing ones. The Council recognizes the excellent work of teachers, schools, and school systems in teaching children to read and write. The Council hopes that this volunteer effort will expand on the successes of teachers and parents and extend the opportunity to learn to read and write to even more children.

This Manual is not a training manual for the volunteer. It is a manual to help organize the volunteer effort. Specific training programs for volunteers can be tailored to meet a particular school's or organization's circumstances. We recommend the involvement of trained reading professionals in the development and implementation of the specific volunteer training agenda and content. This Manual provides sample agendas and outlines as preliminary guides.

These materials are designed to assist schools and other organizations in developing, supporting, and maintaining a volunteer literacy program. Classroom teachers, Reading Recovery teachers, and other reading professionals are encouraged to think creatively about the ways in which volunteers can be engaged to help young students acquire the reading and writing skills that are so important in life.

A word of caution: Developing a volunteer program or expanding an existing one requires care and deliberation. Use this Manual as a guide by choosing the activities and components that fit your circumstances. Use the samples provided in the Resources Section as guides to adapt to your particular situation. And enjoy watching volunteers expand the resources for children's literacy.

Why Volunteers?

Literacy is a critical life skill that affects not only academic success, but life-long success. We know that it is vitally important that students develop adequate reading and writing skills early in their school experience. The goal of a volunteer literacy program is to provide opportunities for beginning readers to receive individual literacy support to strengthen their skills and confidence. Volunteers can play a key role in providing this service. These materials are for any school or organization that wishes to develop volunteer resources to focus on literacy education.

Volunteering is a vital part of our communities and has a long tradition within the school setting. Parents, grandparents, corporate partners and interested citizens are assuming active volunteer roles in schools and community organizations that directly impact the quality of life in our communities. There is a growing awareness of the need to share responsibility for all phases of a community's life, including the education of its children.

In 1995, over 93 million people, aged 18 or older volunteered services worth more than $201 billion dollars (Independent Sector, 1995). This represents almost half (48%) of the American adult population. Volunteers contributed an average of 4.2 hours per week to volunteer service. In addition, 67% of students, grades 9 - 12, are engaged in volunteer activities (Prudential,1995). Of these students, 83% say they volunteer in an educational setting as tutors, peer counselors, and student government representatives.

Although our society has a long tradition of volunteerism, societal changes are having an increased impact on volunteers. Some of the trends shaping volunteerism today are:

- Most people become involved in a volunteer opportunity through a personal invitation from a friend, someone at work, church or synagogue, or a family member.

Adults list 8 primary reasons for their volunteer service:

- A chance to make a difference
- A chance to use a skill or talent
- A chance to develop professional experience or contacts
- A way to express a religious faith
- An avenue to a more balanced life
- An opportunity to give something back
- An opportunity to meet new people
- An opportunity for personal growth and self esteem

(Independent Sector, 1996)

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- Volunteers have higher expectations than in the past. They are looking for meaningful, challenging, interesting work, flexibility and professionalism.

- Volunteers prefer short term assignments, opportunities to volunteer with a group or family members, and the training to accomplish the work.

- The majority of today's volunteers are working people. Sixty-one percent of people who are employed part-time volunteer, and fifty-eight percent of people who work full-time volunteer (Independent Sector, 1997).

- Corporate/employee volunteer programs are one of the fastest growing segments of volunteerism. Volunteers come from a broad cross-section of our society, with growing numbers of professions, students and teens.

- Successful volunteer programs have a clearly articulated vision for the involvement of volunteers. These programs promote teamwork and foster shared leadership.

- There is an increased demand for volunteer services. Organizations are trying to do more with less, resulting in greater competition for volunteers.

- There is a greater level of sophistication in marketing for volunteers. People are more aware of the options and are often attracted by the cause.

The following pages focus on the basic components of a volunteer program: volunteer roles, recruiting, training and retaining, recognizing, and managing risks. Our goal is to provide easily accessible, practical information about developing, expanding and maintaining volunteer resources. Materials may be used with a wide range of people--parents, grandparents, teens, corporate partners--to develop volunteer programs that enhance the work of the classroom teachers and reading professionals, and provide for one-to-one support for students.

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Volunteer Roles

The primary way volunteers can assist with the literacy needs in the school is by providing one-to-one reading and writing opportunities for primary students. Volunteers serve as valuable resources for classroom teachers by working with students who need more personalized learning opportunities.

There are three primary ways that volunteers can assist in the school with early literacy education:

- one-to-one or small group (2-3 students) sessions with the volunteer reading aloud, including discussion of the story;
- one-to-one reading that includes actively listening to a student read and talking about the story; and
- one-to-one support for student writing.

These activities within a classroom setting support on-going instruction. You also may want to develop a home-based reading partner program to encourage parents and family members to provide one-to-one reading opportunities for their children at home.

All of these activities require direct contact with students on a regular basis. Other types of volunteer opportunities that do not require direct contact with students may include the following:

A Program Coordinator may serve as manager of the volunteer literacy program, coordinating teacher needs with volunteer services. A Program Coordinator can help to recruit, schedule, and follow-up with literacy volunteers, thus enhancing the effectiveness of the program and simplifying the work of the classroom teacher.

A Training Coordinator may schedule orientation and training sessions for new volunteers as well as ongoing volunteers. This may include involving other parents in demonstrations or training events or talking with current volunteers to determine future needs.

A Student Buddies Coordinator may develop reading buddies within the school such as matching fourth grade student with a first grade buddy.

This could involve arranging schedules between teachers and students, instruction for and feedback from the older buddies, and on-going monitoring.

A Resource Coordinator may be responsible for organizing supply kits of materials for volunteers to use when working with individual students. This coordination of the resources could be done after school hours by a working parent who is limited from day time participation.

A Speakers' Coordinator may recruit several parents to serve as speakers for school or community functions, to share information about the school's volunteer literacy program, and to invite other members of the community to become engaged in this important work. Speakers may share how the volunteer program has affected their children or their personal experience as a literacy volunteer.

A Community Partners' Coordinator may explore ways in which the volunteer literacy program can be expanded to the larger community. This person may encourage local churches to include reading and writing opportunities in Sunday School, or encourage a local business to provide after school tutoring opportunities. This coordinator may work with child care providers or parents to foster literacy training outside of the classroom.

There are many parents and community members that want to help, but do not feel they have something to offer. They may not know the value of simply reading to a student. There may be obstacles that hold people back from getting involved. Some parents and family members are not literate themselves and feel embarrassed to share this. Sometimes adults have negative feelings about school, based on personal experiences. Others feel uncomfortable in the structured school setting. Making volunteering accessible to all involves finding creative ways for people to make contributions, and it involves creating an atmosphere that welcomes the contributions of all. Teachers, school personnel, and other volunteers must all work together to create a welcoming "team" atmosphere that invites, encourages and recognizes participation.

There are many ways in which volunteers can play an important role in early literacy education. We encourage you to be creative.

- Brainstorm with teachers, parents and volunteers
- Divide the work into small, do-able chunks to fit the busy lifestyles of today's families
- As you develop your program be alert to individuals that show initiative and leadership
- Invite them to assume a greater role in the program
- A "promotion" is a wonderful form of recognition for initiative, leadership, and "a job well done"

Finding good, dedicated volunteers for your school or organization is a challenge that can be easier than expected if you follow some basic guidelines.

Identify a task or project that is really worth doing. Expecting people to volunteer simply on a plea of "we need help" is usually not successful. Be clear on why you want volunteers. The better you are at explaining the work to be done and how volunteers will be a part of accomplishing important goals, the more likely you will hear a "yes" when requesting help.

Describe the work to be done in a written job description. The job description clearly outlines the duties, expectations and responsibilities of both the volunteer and the school personnel. Include such things as the purpose of the work, responsibilities, number of hours required and benefits to the volunteer. Be sure to include the training you will be providing to help the volunteer accomplish the task. Many people are hesitant to volunteer because they think they are not qualified or lack the needed skills. Sample job descriptions are included in the Resources Section.

For each volunteer job description, brainstorm a list of sources for potential volunteers. Parents will probably be your first source of volunteers. Expand the list to consider grandparents, baby-sitters, older students within your school building, students from a nearby high school, students from local colleges, fraternities and sororities, local businesses, people from a local senior citizen center or a local library branch. Contact local places of worship and place notices in bulletins. Contact Girl Scout and Boy Scout troop leaders to identify members who are pursuing specific merit badges. The success of your recruitment campaign rests in large measure on your creativity in considering where you might find likely candidates.

For each potential source of volunteers, select the most appropriate technique to communicate your message. For example, if you are seeking literacy volunteers at local libraries, you might put your message on

Literacy volunteers can fulfill important roles in the volunteer literacy program, such as:

- working in the classroom during regular school hours as a reading/writing partner for a beginning student
- working outside of the classroom as a reading partner for a beginning student
- serving as a liaison between a classroom or reading teacher and the other volunteers
- teaching and sharing information with families and other volunteers
- providing logistical support (such as organizing and conducting meetings, providing transportation, etc.
- assisting with administrative responsibilities (such as completing reports, making presentations, etc.)
- assisting with future planning.

Brainstorm with classroom teachers, parents and other volunteers to identify the variety of ways in which volunteers can be involved in your program. Consider dividing large jobs into small tasks that can be done by several people. Be creative!

bookmarks that can be slipped into books as they are checked out. If you plan to recruit in a college dining hall, it would be better to use a notice on a public bulletin board. To recruit high school students, locate the teacher or counselor in charge of the service learning programs, or the student honorary groups like Key Club, and offer opportunities for students to fulfill their service requirements through your volunteer literacy program. Advertise your opportunities on your web page to attract the attention of "surfers."

Volunteer Recruitment

Set a goal for how many volunteers you need for your program. Recruiting 50 people for ten openings will not be a positive experience for forty of these people. If you have limited opportunities for volunteers to be engaged in your program, it is better to limit the marketing for those opportunities.

Whenever you are looking, your goal is to ask people to volunteer. There is a big difference between publicizing your program and recruiting volunteers. Publicity informs people about what you are doing, but it does not necessarily motivate people to come forward and get involved. Your goal is to invite them to become involved in the work of your program.

The following recruiting tips may help.

Be sincere! The best volunteer recruiters are enthusiastic, like what they are doing, and value the work of the organization. They are able to articulate clearly the importance of the work and how the volunteer will help make a difference in the lives of students. They do not apologize for the work or required training. They do not beg or twist arms to get a volunteer.

Whenever possible, ask in person. Research shows that most people volunteer because someone asked them to do it. Speak to candidates one-to-one so that you can address their interests and concerns. Remember, you are not asking people to do you a favor. You are offering them an opportunity to do something important, and you don't want them to be

Explore the neighborhood around the school for businesses that might want to be involved in a volunteer literacy program. Many corporations and businesses have community relations programs that encourage their employees to become involved in the community. Banks are often very interested in community involvement. Most businesses do not give employees "time off", so you will have to find creative ways to involve these working people. Perhaps they can take an early or late lunch hour one day a week to spend time reading with a student.

Beyond your immediate neighborhood, explore the larger corporations in your community to see if they have corporate volunteer programs. Contact the Community Relations Department to explore the corporate interests and how you might advertise for volunteers through their newsletters and postings. Create a message that talks about the importance of good reading and writing skills for the future workforce. Find ways to make it easy for employees to become involved. For example, ten volunteers that give one lunch hour two times a month can provide daily individualized literacy opportunities for beginning students. A more detailed guide for recruiting workplace volunteers is available in the Resources Section of this packet.

left out! If you are speaking to a group of people, be sure to extend the invitation to sign up before they leave so that you can contact them individually to discuss their involvement. Follow-up quickly.

Ask people to do specific jobs, not just to "volunteer." A volunteer is a type of person, not a description of what they are doing. Design creative and descriptive job titles for the work to be done.

Explain to the volunteers individually why you have approached them. Tell them they have the skills and talent to do the job. Be sure to let them know what's in it for them. Don't focus exclusively on your needs. Express the benefits of volunteering. Talk about the impact or result of the volunteers' efforts on young readers. Also point out how the volunteers will learn new things, gain insights, and meet new people with similar interests. Be sure to emphasize the fun side of volunteering--nice people, camaraderie, and a sense of accomplishment.

Answer all questions honestly and fully. You don't want to spring surprises on volunteers later. Talk about expectations and time commitments. Often people are more challenged by hard work than by being asked to do something that sounds too easy.

Reassure potential volunteers that you will be providing the support and resources that will help them accomplish the job. Discuss the training, supervision, and follow-up that will be provided. Describe resources and people who can assist them. Many people hesitate to volunteer because they think they are not qualified or lack the needed skills.

Once potential volunteers say yes, get them involved quickly while their interest and enthusiasm are fresh and high. Consider assigning a buddy or mentor to help answer questions and make new volunteers feel welcome and supported.

Tips for Recruiting from the Workplace

❶ Identify appropriate companies

a. Look around the immediate neighborhood to see what businesses and organizations are neighbors.

b. Explore connections to the business community through parents, spouses, and relatives. Ask if they can provide information on appropriate contacts at the company with which they are associated.

c. Is there a common ground between your organization or school and the company? Do they serve families from your school?

d. Are there businesses that have contributed to your school, either financially or in-kind? If they have been supportive of you in the past, perhaps they would like to give their employees an opportunity to become involved.

❷ Know the company

a. Is there a structured employee volunteer program in place? If so, what are the specific policies of the program?

b. What kinds of community efforts have they been involved with before?

c. Who is the appropriate contact person?

❸ Create an exchange

a. Too often we tend to think of a one-way relationship with corporations: "We ask and they give." The goal should be to develop an on-going relationship by identifying and meeting their needs. Businesses tend to expect a "return" on their investments.

b. Possible exchanges might include:

1. Recognition. Can you offer the company publicity for their involvement? Good advertising is a major expense for most companies. Think of ways you can promote them by sharing what their employees are doing for the children in your community. Consider stories in your newsletter, or in the community newspaper. Send copies of any stories and thank-you letter not just to the volunteers, but to key company personnel, even the CEO.

2. Create a sense of belonging and accomplishment. Send a written report that talks of the impact of their involvement.

Maintain regular communication with the company. Invite them to school activities and events. Recognize their contributions at assemblies and parent meetings.

4. Identify an exchange of service. Perhaps there is a service you can offer in return. Maybe the students can send art work for a display at the business. You might include some employees in an educational seminar. Or perhaps you can offer an educational seminar on developing literacy skills that would help employees to work with their own children.

Be ready

a. Know what you need and put it in writing. Businesses prefer specificity. They will not spend the time to figure out what your needs are.

b. Be specific. Include program goals, volunteer job descriptions, number of people needed, the time commitments, and how the project will benefit your students and the company employees.

Give plenty of lead time

a. Most companies need a minimum of two months to gear up for an employee volunteer program.

b. If you are asking them to publicize your needs in their newsletter, find out how often it is published and submit your material well in advance.

Keep the company informed

a. Once they have agreed to assist you, touch base with them regularly to keep them informed of progress and to listen to their ideas and needs.

b. Don't wait until the end of the school year to say thank you. Recognition should be on-going.

Be professional. Businesses want to be associated with winners. You don't have to be a big organization or have a lot of flash, but you do have to show stability and professionalism as an organization and in the way your school works with volunteers. Happy, satisfied volunteers recruit new volunteers!

Your community may have established volunteer programs which you can tap. For example:

- Check your phone book for a local Volunteer Center or contact United Way for assistance in locating potential volunteers.
- RSVP (Retired Senior Volunteer Program) and Foster Grandparents are federally funded programs that exist in many cities.
- A local AARP Chapter (American Association of Retired Persons) or the Office on Aging may be able to provide you with senior resources.
- Universities often have Panhellenic Offices to oversee the activities of local sororities and fraternities. They may also have a University Honors Program that coordinates the activities of a variety of honorary groups. Most honorary associations require their members to be engaged in community service work.
- Community colleges and universities have federal work study programs which involve students in tutoring children to learn to read and write.

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Training and Retaining Volunteers

Helping volunteers feel capable and giving them a sense of belonging begins with a good orientation program and continues through training. The orientation process should provide an understanding of the volunteer literacy program and prepare the volunteers to begin their specific jobs. It is important that new volunteers understand the rules and procedure where to go for assistance, and where to find supplies. Orientation may be offered in a group setting or individually.

Volunteers tend to stay involved with organizations when:

- they feel capable of handling the tasks offered
- they feel personally appreciated
- they see their work makes a difference
- there is a sense of belonging and teamwork among co-workers
- they receive public and private recognition

Orientation

The following specific items should be included in volunteer orientation:

❶ The purpose and function of a volunteer literacy program

❷ The volunteer's contribution to a volunteer literacy program

- Why are volunteers involved?
- How do they help?
- What are their roles?
- How do they assist teachers and staff?
- What does their assistance mean to a student?

❸ A tour of the facilities and an overview of the resources

❹ The demands to be placed on the volunteer

- Expectations and responsibilities of the specific job
- School rules and regulations
- Volunteer program rules and regulations
- Reporting and follow-up procedures
- Meeting time and place
- Commitments and training schedules
- Evaluation procedures

The first orientation to your program is a critical one. If it is handled well and provides complete and clear information, it will begin to build the trust and teamwork that is essential for volunteer satisfaction. A guideline for orientation is provided in the Resources Section.

Training

The second step in helping volunteers feel capable is the training program. Surveys have shown that many people are hesitant to volunteer because they do not think they have the skills or knowledge for the job. It is important, therefore, to provide training that will assist volunteers in the task they have accepted. When possible, include Reading Recovery and other reading professionals in the design and delivery of your early literacy training. They have useful insights, techniques and resources to enhance the training program and assist parents and volunteers as they work with students.

Sometimes it is better to provide ongoing training instead of trying to cover everything in one session. Concentrate on those points that will help the volunteers get started and feel comfortable. Later you can offer them further training opportunities to expand their knowledge and learn new skills. Sample training outlines are included in the Resources Section.

The training programs can be designed to support the following volunteer activities:

One-to-one or small group (2-3 students) sessions with the volunteer reading aloud. This may require limited training. Some volunteers may be immediately comfortable with the students, while others may be more hesitant. Do not assume that everyone is comfortable walking into the classroom and doing this. Provide "tips" on reading aloud: demonstrate what is expected, where to find the books, how to answer student questions, and how to encourage questions. Share ideas for discussing the stories and talking with the students. Allow volunteers an opportunity to practice a read-aloud session while a teacher or coach is present. Give constructive feedback and encouragement when needed.

One-to-one work with a student reader. This may require more training to help volunteers understand how to engage the student in talking about the book and how to encourage additional reading. It is often helpful to provide a demonstration as well as an opportunity for a volunteer-child

practice session. Follow-up with volunteers after they have had a few opportunities to work with a student to see if they have questions or concerns.

Supporting student writing skills in a one-to-one setting. This requires a very supportive setting with substantial involvement of teachers to support what the child already knows how to do. Classroom teachers should determine the extent of the role which volunteers play in supporting student writing skills. Once volunteers are identified for this role, careful collaboration between the teacher and the volunteer provides the basis for training for this volunteer activity.

Ongoing Communication

Orientation and training are important components of helping volunteers feel supported, but ongoing communication is essential for a successful program. Volunteers remain committed when they feel supported and appreciated for the difference they are making. Sometimes a volunteer's interests or needs change, and it is important to be flexible and to offer new challenges and/or opportunities.

Volunteer leaders and classroom teachers must take time to talk with volunteers on an ongoing basis to offer encouragement and to help with questions or problems. Ask for suggestions to improve the program and listen to the ideas offered. Establish a schedule for checking on progress and find ways to let volunteers know how the student is doing in his/her academic work so that they can celebrate the results of their efforts. Offer opportunities for volunteers to talk with other volunteers to share ideas, discuss challenges, and build a sense of teamwork.

Follow up interactive meetings and ongoing training experiences can begin with quick, informal "show and tell" of what worked or what needs to be improved. Encourage teachers and other school personnel to be warm and friendly with the literacy volunteers. The more support you offer, the more volunteers will feel valued.

Recognition Principles

Volunteer Recognition

Recognition should be an ongoing, year round process. It is not limited to an annual event when everyone receives a certificate, pin, or small momento. Recognition comes via smiles, calling people by name, personal notes, birthday cards, and little "warm fuzzies." Recognition is finding formal and informal ways of saying "thank you."

Recognition should be personal and always appropriate to the person. Knowing a person's motivation for volunteering helps determine the most personal form of recognition. Personalized recognition is based on the notion that people are different with different needs and preferences. One person may like a note from the classroom teacher, another may prefer a note from the student. "I wrote your boss about the great job you do for us," may be very meaningful for a corporate employee. A senior volunteer may prefer cookies or lunch. Student artwork may be more meaningful than a certificate signed by the principal. Personal recognition is creative and fun. It need not be formal or expensive to be effective.

Recognition should be timely. An immediate "thank you" or "job well done" is more important than a certificate at the end of the school year.

Recognition should be given to volunteers who show initiative and leadership. Give promotions. Invite volunteers to share their ideas with other volunteers. Include creative volunteers in the training of new volunteers. When you discover people doing good things, acknowledge it!

Recognition should be given to those who facilitate and work with volunteers. Acknowledge the classroom teacher school secretary for their part in creating an atmosphere that welcomes and rewards volunteers. They are a part of the team and it is helpful to recognize their contributions also.

Recognition should be sincere, genuine, and appropriately related to performance. Share student work that shows progress to let volunteer know they are making a difference!

In order to give such recognition, you should maintain accurate records when you are providing documentation of service letters or reference letters. These letters are important forms of recognition for high school and college students and corporate volunteers. They document kinds of work done, hours of service, accomplishments, and training taken.

It is helpful to involve volunteers and other school professionals and staff in the planning and organizing of formal recognition programs. In particular, volunteers should participate in the process of deciding about "awards," including type, number and criteria for selecting recipients.

Recognition materials are included in the Resources Section, including camera ready art work that may be duplicated for your use.

Recognition can be as informal as a "thank you" or as formal as an annual banquet. Regardless of what you do, it is extremely important for volunteers to know their efforts are appreciated.

The following are additional suggestions of effective ways to recognize your volunteers:

- Learn the names of volunteers, greet them personally, and introduce them to others at every opportunity
- Provide special name tags for volunteers
- Say "thank you" at every appropriate occasion. It cannot be overused
- Telephone volunteers who are unable to participate because of illness or family circumstances. Let them know they are missed
- Send copies of letters of appreciation to employers, teachers, parents, and others

- Write letters of reference or commendation that volunteers might use when applying for scholarships, service requirements, entrance to educational programs, or other types of personal advancement
- Encourage all school personnel to greet each volunteer with a warm smile and a friendly "hello"
- Send handwritten notes of appreciation for volunteer service performed
- Have students send handwritten or drawn notes of appreciation
- Recognize volunteers during faculty meetings or parent nights
- Provide an informal pizza party for student volunteers or reading buddies
- Provide a space in the school for volunteers to store coats or personal belongings
- Design a special bulletin board display to feature news about volunteers and the volunteer literacy program. Include snapshots of each volunteer
- Conduct a Volunteer of the Month program. Give the winner a reserved parking spot near the front door
- Develop a newsletter about the volunteer program. Share volunteers' ideas and personal stories
- Sponsor a Recognition Week during which all volunteers wear special ribbons or buttons and receive extra attention from staff and students
- Involve the students in recognition events. Let them present the certificates or awards to their special volunteers
- Submit information about outstanding volunteers or your volunteer program to local newspapers. Nominate them for community, state and national awards

Risk Management

As you develop a volunteer program to work with young children, you need to give some consideration to the inherent risks. A volunteer may fall and get hurt. A volunteer can accidentally damage equipment. A volunteer may inadvertently push a student. A volunteer's car may be damaged while in the parking lot. A purse may turn up missing. Very few work environments are risk free. Schools have an obligation to protect volunteers. Programs that involve children have an extra obligation to creating safeguards for all involved.

Most paid workers are covered by Workers Compensation. This is a type of employees insurance designed to cover injuries that are work related. General liability insurance covers broken or stolen equipment and supplies. People who are required to transport others in their cars often have supplemental auto insurance. Volunteers, as non-paid workers, are often excluded from Workers Compensation and other forms of organizational coverage designed for employees. Schools may add "riders" to cover volunteers or purchase special "volunteer insurance" to provide protection against accidents or negligence.

Locking your car overnight on a city street is risk management. You acknowledge there is a potential risk and you take some measure to reduce that risk. A thief can still break a window, so you put your property in the trunk. This may be safer, but it is still not risk free. Even taking all property out of the car does not eliminate the potential damage to the car itself. Every day we accept risks in our lives. So too with a volunteer literacy program. The goal of risk management is to "manage" posential risks.

Purchasing insurance is a form of risk management known as **risk transfer**. This means that you move the responsibility for the risk somewhere else. As you develop your volunteer program, it is important that you check within the school district to see what types of protection currently exist and to what extent it will cover volunteers. In place of insurance (or in addition to insurance) schools also may ask volunteers to sign waivers to release the school from liability.

A second form of controlling risks is **risk reduction**. Volunteer orientation and training provide volunteers with the "tools" needed to work in a safe environment. Volunteers need to know where to find the first aid kit, the location of the nurse's office, or where to go for assistance. Volunteers need to clearly understand the policies related to being in the school environment, for example, sign-in procedures, name tags, taking property from place to place, and other rules. The volunteer job description is a form of risk reduction because it clarifies how, where, and when the volunteer works. Some schools ask volunteers to sign job descriptions and policy statements to insure that volunteers are aware of policies, restrictions and limitations.

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Risk management is the thoughtful process of acknowledging and controlling risks to protect and conserve resources. Risk management looks at vulnerabilities within the program that can lead to an active threat and takes appropriate steps to control the risk. Risk management is the process of developing good day-to-day operating policies, procedures and training.

Risk prevention usually involves removing the circumstances in which something can occur. You should strive to prevent some risks by being certain that volunteers and students are never alone together. Work should be done in the classroom, library, or study area that is accessible and monitored. This is a protection for volunteers as well as students.

The best policies, the best training, and the best insurance cannot guarantee that you are risk free. General liability insurance does not protect against claims of sexual abuse or molestation. The only way to totally protect your program from all risks is to eliminate the risks, or "risk avoidance." This might mean you do not have a volunteer literacy program. You eliminate the program to eliminate the risks. This generally is not a desirable alternative. Without volunteers many students would go without the personalized assistance that can make a difference in their lives. Volunteers play vital roles in our schools, and most schools are not willing to eliminate volunteer programs. Instead, schools find ways to manage and minimize the risks.

The most effective way to manage risks is to identify the areas of risk and determine the best management strategy--transfer, reduction, prevention and acceptance through standardized procedures and policies such as:

- All volunteers will complete a volunteer application
- Each volunteer will sign a written job description to acknowledge duties and responsibilities
- Volunteers should stay within the parameters established in written job descriptions
- All volunteers must sign in at the school office and wear a volunteer badge while on school grounds
- Volunteers will never be alone with a student
- Volunteers will never discipline a student
- Volunteers will never meet with students outside of school

The list of Selected Readings has references and reading materials on risk management. *These guidelines are not meant to serve as legal advice in this matter.* Specific situations and questions may warrant legal counsel, and these should be dealt with through the proper authorities in the school.

Selected Readings

Volunteeer Management Resources

America's Volunteers, 1996. Independent Sector, Washington, D.C.

Ellis, Susan, 1994. *The Volunteer Recruitment Book*, Energize Inc., Philadelphia, PA.

Fisher, James & Cole, Kathleen, 1993. *The Leadership and Management of Volunteer Programs*, Jossey-Bass Publishers, San Francisco.

Giving and Volunteering in the United States, 1995. Independent Sector, Washington, D.C.

Henson, Sarah & Larson, Bruce, 1988. *Risk Management: Strategies for Managing Volunteer Programs*, Macduff/Bunt Associates, Inc., Walla Walls, WA.

MacKenzie, Marilyn & Gail Moore, 1993. *The Volunteer Development Toolbox*, Heritage Arts Press, Downers Grove, IL.

Patterson, John, 1994. Staff Screening Tool Kit: *Keeping the Bad Apples Out of Your Organization*, Nonprofit Risk Managment Center, Washington, D.C.

Recchi, Bea, 1997. *Volunteers in Public Schools: Handbook for Volunteers*, Lancaster Public Schools, Lancaster, OH.

The Prudential Spirit of Community Youth Survey: A Study of High School Students on Community Involvement, 1995. The Prudential, Newark, New Jersey.

Tremper, Charles & Gwynne Kostin, 1994. *No Surprises: Controlling Risks in Volunteer Programs*, Nonprofit Risk Management Center, Washington, D.C.

Training Resources

Pinnell, Gay Su & Fountas, Irene C., 1997. *Help America Read: A Handbook for Volunteers*, Heinemann, Portsmouth, NH.

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Pinnell, Gay Su & Fountas, Irene C., 1997. *Help America Read: A Handbook for Volunteers/Coordinator's Guide*, Heinemann, Portsmouth, NH.

Charna, Debbie, Roush, Wendy, Salem, Lynn & Stewart, Josie, 1997. *The Partners Video*, Seedling Publications, Inc., Columbus, OH.

Dundas & Strong, 1991. *Readers, Writers and Parents–Learning Together*, Richard Owen Publishers, Inc., Katonah, NY.

Parent Resources

Worthington, Denise, 1997. *When a Child Reads . . . Some Answers to Your Questions*, Seedling Publications, Columbus, OH.

Gibson, Ray, 1993. *Reading Games*, EDC Publications, Tulsa, Oklahoma.

Kaye, Peggy, 1984. *Games for Reading: Playful Ways to Help Your Child*, Pantheon Books, New York, NY.

Kaye, Peggy, 1995. *Games for Writing: Playful Ways to Help Your Child Write*, Noonday Press, New York, NY.

U. S. Department of Education, 1997. *Simple Things You Can Do*, America Reads Challenge, 1-800-USA-LEARN.

U. S. Department of Education, 1997, Washington, D.C., 1-800-USA-LEARN.
America Reads Challenge: Read*Write*Now! Publications:

Read*Write* Now! Basic Kit: Activities for Reading and Writing Fun

Read*Write*Now! Partners Tutoring Program

Read*Write*Now! Early Childhood Kit

Read*Write*Now! Just Add Kids: A Resource Directory of Learning Partners, Reading Sites, and other Literacy Organizations that Serve Children and Their Families.

Read*Write*Now! Learning to Read, Reading to Learn: Helping Children with Learning Disabilities to Succeed

READING
RECOVERY
COUNCIL
Volunteer Literacy Manual
Resources Section
IBM

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Resources Section

Materials in the Resources Section may be duplicated without risk of copyright infringement. Some materials are printed on the enclosed diskette to facilitate duplication. See user's guide.

READING RECOVERY COUNCIL

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Literacy Volunteer Application
Sample A

Name _____

Mailing Address _____

_____

Phone Day _____ Evening _____

Social Security Number _____

Volunteer Interest

Why are you interested in being a reading volunteer? _____

_____

Do you prefer to work with ❑ students ❑ parents ❑ teachers ❑ other

What time commitment are you able to make? _____

Previous work experience

Employer	Position Title	Year

Previous volunteer experience

Organization	Volunteer Role	Year

Personal References

Name two persons not related to you who have knowledge of your qualifications. Please provide complete addresses and phone numbers.

1. Name _____ Relationship _____

Address _____

Phone: Day _____ Evening _____

2. Name _____ Relationship _____

Address _____

Phone: Day _____ Evening _____

Have you been convicted of a misdemeanor or a felony in the last seven years? _____

If yes, please give date, nature and disposition of offense _____

_____

Please note: A criminal record will not necessarily prevent an applicant from being a volunteer. A criminal record will be considered as it relates to specifics of the volunteer position for which you are applying.

I authorize the contact of listed references. I understand that the misrepresentation or omission of information requested is just cause for non-appointment as a literacy volunteer. If appointed as a volunteer, I agree to abide by the policies of the program and to fulfill the volunteer responsibilities to the best of my ability.

_____

Applicant Signature Date

Literacy Volunteer Application
Sample B

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____(home) _____(work)

Please circle your preference

1. I can volunteer on . . .

Monday Tuesday Wednesday Thursday Friday

2. I am available . . . once a week every other week once a month

3. I would prefer these grade levels . . .

K 1 2 3 4 5 6 Any

4. The best time for me will be . . .

Morning Afternoon Either

5. I am available to stay for more than one class period? ❑ Yes ❑ No
(Some volunteers prefer to stay for the entire morning and volunteer with several students in different grade levels.)

6. If your time is restricted to particular hours, please indicate those hours: _____

Volunteer Record Card
Sample

Miss
Mrs. _____ Home Phone _____
Mr. Work Phone _____
Best time to be reached _____

Address: _____

Birthday: Date _____ Month _____

Number of children in the school system _____

School(s) _____ Teacher(s) _____

_____ _____

Physical limitations or restrictions _____

Educational background _____High School _____College

Area of specialization _____

Volunteer Experience or Paid experience

Dates Type of work Organization Volunteer/Paid

_____

_____

_____

Preference in grade level

Kdgn. _____ Grades 1,2 _____ Grades 3,4 _____

Preferred area of service

One-to-one _____ Read-Aloud _____ Clerical _____

Resource Person _____ Parent Mentor _____ Coordinator _____

Other (Please specify) _____

Times Available

Monday Tuesday Wednesday Thursday Friday

A.M. _____

P.M. _____

How many days will you volunteer per week _____? per month _____?

Person(s) to be notified in case of emergency

1. _____
Name Phone Relationship

2. _____
Name Phone Relationship

AS A VOLUNTEER, I AGREE TO WORK WITHIN THE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES OF THIS SCHOOL SYSTEM.

_____
(Signature of volunteer) (date)

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

_____ has been assigned to:
Name of volunteer

Teacher: _____ Student: _____

Other: _____ _____

Grade: _____

Location: _____ Day _____ Time _____

Location: _____ Day _____ Time _____

Volunteer Request Form
Sample

From: _____

To (Teacher): _____

Grade: _____

1. Would you like a trained literacy volunteer in your room this year? _____Yes _____No

2. Please indicate how many volunteers you will need to work directly with your students

_____

3. List the name of the students with whom they will work.

_____ _____

_____ _____

_____ _____

_____ _____

4. What times will be best for you?

_____ 1st choice

_____ 2nd choice

_____ 3rd choice

5. Please list the names of parents who would benefit from this training to use at home with their children.

Thank you for your support!

Volunteer Literacy Program
Volunteer Survey
Sample

1. What worked best for you when volunteering with a student?

_____

_____

2. What was most difficult?

_____

_____

3. Where did you see the greatest improvement or results with your student(s)?

_____

_____

4. What was most helpful in the training session(s)?

_____

_____

5. What would you like to see changed or added to the training session(s)?

_____

_____

THANK YOU

Volunteer Literacy Program
Staff Survey
Sample

1. What worked well with the literacy volunteers assigned to your room?

_____

_____

_____

2. What was a problem or difficulty?

_____

_____

_____

3. What recommendations do you have to include in the orientation and training to alleviate some of these difficulties?

_____

_____

_____

THANK YOU

Volunteer Sign-in Sheet
Sample

Volunteer _____ Phone _____

Teacher(s) _____

DATE	TIME IN	TIME OUT	HOURS WORKED

Job Description Outline
Sample

Title

Purpose

Duties and Responsibilities

Qualifications

Training Requirements

Location

Commitment

Supervisor

Benefits

_____
Name

_____
Date

Job Description
Sample

Title: Literacy Volunteer

Purpose: To assist young readers who are experiencing difficulty in their first year of reading instruction by providing individual opportunities to practice reading in a supportive, encouraging environment.

Duties and Responsibilities: Spend time with a beginning reader listening to him/her read OR read with a small group of two to three children. Provide appropriate support and encouragement. Introduce the young reader(s) to new books. Monitor progress by talking about the story. May assist the student(s) with writing activities that strengthen writing skills.

Qualifications: Desire to help primary students strengthen their literacy skills. Ability to read beginning level books. Patience. Sense of humor.

Training Requirements: All volunteers are required to attend a two hour orientation and training session to learn about the volunteer literacy program and techniques for literacy assistance. Follow-up meetings may be scheduled as needed to introduce new materials or reinforce techniques of literacy assistance. Training sessions and follow-up meetings will be held in the evenings between 7-9 p.m. at _____ School.

Location: All activities will be performed at_____ School between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m.

Commitment: Volunteers are required to spend 30 minutes per week with their assigned reading partner or group over a three month period.

Supervisor:

Benefits: Volunteers will have an opportunity

- to make a difference in a child's world by helping him/her become a better reader.
- to learn supportive reading techniques.
- to assist in the educational process.
- to learn about reading materials that can be used with other children.

_____
NAME

_____
DATE

Job Description
Sample

Title: Parent Reading Partner

Purpose: To assist their young reader in the first years of literacy instruction by providing individualized opportunities to improve literacy skills in a supportive, encouraging home environment.

Duties and Responsibilities: Spend one-on-one time outside of the classroom with their beginning reader listening to him/her read. Provide appropriate support and encouragement. Introduce their young reader to new books. Ask questions and discuss the stories. Assist their child with writing activities.

Qualifications: Desire to help a young reader strengthen literacy skills. Ability to read beginning level books. Patience. Sense of humor.

Training Requirements: All interested parents are encouraged to attend a two hour orientation and training session to learn the principles and techniques of literacy assistance. Follow up sessions may be scheduled as needed to introduce new materials or to reinforce techniques of literacy assistance. Training sessions and follow up meetings will be held in the evenings between 7-9 p.m. at _____ School.

Location: Primarily in the home, but may include other locations such as the library, church or synagogue, various waiting rooms, and similar other places.

Commitment: Parents are encouraged to spend 15-20 minutes daily with their child during the school year.

Supervisor:

Benefits: Parents will have an opportunity:

- to make a difference in their child's world by helping him/her become a better reader.
- to learn supportive reading techniques.
- to assist in the educational process.
- to learn about reading materials that can be used with other children.

_____
NAME

_____
DATE

Job Description
Sample

Title: Volunteer Literacy Program Coordinator

Purpose: To increase the impact of the volunteer literacy program for young students through coordination of volunteers and parents who are providing literacy support to the students.

Duties and Responsibilities: Assist classroom or reading teachers in the recruitment, training, and scheduling of classroom and parent volunteers. Schedule meetings to explain the program to potential volunteers. Give overview and informational speeches at home and school meetings and/or community meetings. Respond to telephone inquiries. Schedule orientation and training sessions for new volunteers. Provide appropriate materials and assist with the training process. Serve as a liaison between the teachers and volunteers to schedule appropriate times for literacy sessions. Maintain contact on a monthly basis with classroom volunteers to monitor progress, answer questions, and provide resources and encouragement. Work closely with teachers to assess current needs.

Qualifications: One year experience as a literacy volunteer desired. Ability to work with a variety of people. Self starter with good management skills. Desire to help young students improve their literacy skills. Good communication skills.

Training Requirements: Volunteer literacy program orientation and training.

Location: Flexible. Some activities such as training may take place within the school building. Telephone work, such as scheduling and monitoring, can be done from home.

Commitment: Two to three hours per week for nine months (following the school calendar). Flexible hours as needed to accomplish the tasks.

Supervisor:

Benefits: Volunteer Literacy Coordinator will have the opportunity

- to develop leadership and management skills
- to work with a variety of people
- to have personal impact within the educational system
- to create and maintain a supportive environment for parents and volunteers
- to serve as a mentor to other parents and volunteers

_____
NAME

_____
DATE

Job Description
Sample

Title: Parent Support Coordinator

Purpose: To provide support and educational opportunities to parents of primary students to assist them in their efforts to strengthen the literacy skills of their children.

Duties and Responsibilities: Plan, organize and facilitate a "parent night" for parents of children. Work with classroom and reading teachers to design literacy assistance orientation and training programs for parents. Make home visits or phone calls to provide encouragement and support to parents. Identify other person to work with the student outside the classroom - baby sitter, sibling, grandparent, neighbor or others - if parent is unable to assist.

Qualifications: One year of experience as a literacy volunteer. Ability to work with a wide variety of people. Good communication and organizational skills.

Training Requirement: Volunteer literacy program orientation and training.

Location: Flexible. Parent meeting may be held at _____ School or in other appropriate community locations.

Commitment: Two to three hours per week during the school year. Must be available in the evenings for home visits and parent meetings.

Supervisor:

Benefits: Parent Support Coordinator will have the opportunity

- to create educational training sessions
- to work with a variety of parents
- to develop increased knowledge about reading, school and community resources
- to problem solve with individual parents

_____
NAME

_____
DATE

Volunteer Job Description
Sample

Title: Parent Mentor

Purpose: To provide individualized support to parents of young readers.

Duties and Responsibilities: Develop a one-on-one relationship with parents to offer counsel, support, encouragement, and resources. Be available to the parent to answer questions and explore options and techniques.

Qualifications: Thorough knowledge of the volunteer literacy program. One year of experience as a literacy volunteer. Ability to be a good listener and problem solver.

Training Requirements: Volunteer literacy program orientation and training.

Location: Flexible. Mentors may meet in parent home, school building, or a community location agreeable to both parties. Recommend at least one session be held in the parent's home.

Commitment: One contact per week for first month. Thereafter, one contact per month, in person or by phone. Times are flexible to fit schedules of parent and mentor.

Supervisor:

Benefits: Parent Mentor will have the opportunity:

- to work individually with a parent to provide support and resources.
- to develop reading habits within a family.
- to make a difference in the life of a child.
- to share knowledge and experience in a meaningful manner.

_____
NAME

_____
DATE

Guidelines for Volunteer Orientation Programs

Suggestions for the Presenter

1. Visual aids and printed materials lend interest and effectiveness to an orientation program. Brochures and printed information should be distributed.
2. Presenter should be knowledgeable, enthusiastic, communicative and engaging.
3. If you are unable to answer a specific question, agree to find the information and get back to the volunteer.
4. Decide who else should be present to assist with the orientation.
5. If possible, provide a visual demonstration of what the volunteers might be doing. Or consider a role playing situation that will stimulate questions.
6. Be prepared to address basic program information such as:

- history
- structure
- time/length of meetings
- length of commitment
- length of commitment
- resources
- group meetings/support
- program
- funding
- responsibilities of volunteers possible assignments
- supervision/staff
- reporting procedures

Suggestions for Effective Orientation

1. Define the program's primary purpose and the role of volunteers in achieving that purpose.
2. Encourage questions during the presentation and provide a question and answer period at the end.
3. In a group setting, allow people an opportunity to interact.
4. Use "lay" vocabulary as much as possible. Avoid using "jargon" - acronyms, specific terms and language that is know only to "insider." Define terms being used in the volunteer literacy program which may be unfamiliar to the volunteers.
5. Conduct the orientation in pleasant surroundings, conducive to learning.
6. Build confidence in the volunteer. Be cautious not to overwhelm the volunteer. Provide assurance that assistance will be available.
7. Encourage the volunteers to develop skills through participation in training sessions, conversations with experienced volunteers, and reading materials and resources available through the program.
8. Encourage the volunteer to express his or her ideas and suggestions.
9. If possible, provide an opportunity for the volunteers to meet the teacher(s) and/or student(s) with whom they will be working.
10. Stress the benefits beginning readers receive from a volunteer's contribution. Speak of the personal satisfactions that volunteers receive from their work in this program. If possible, provide an opportunity for testimonials from current volunteers.

Training Agenda
Volunteer Literacy Training
60-90 Minutes
Sample

Purpose: To prepare volunteers to provide one-on-one or small group (2-3 students) classroom literacy experiences for primary students. To provide an opportunity for the volunteer reading partner to practice working with a child or a small group while receiving suggestions and assistance in a supportive setting from the trainer.

Location: Training typically occurs in the school.

Materials: A selection of books pre-selected by the teacher to assure an appropriate reading level. VCR and monitor. Handouts summarizing information that has been presented.

1. **Opening: Introductions and purpose of the meeting.**
2. **Possible topics to include:**

    a. A brief discussion of guidelines for volunteer interactions with readers.
    b. How to introduce a new book.
    c. How to talk about a story.
    d. How to encourage children to respond to what they read.
    e. How to praise.
    f. How to record what the child does.

3. **Video Presentation:** Make a video to demonstrate what the volunteer or parent will be doing.
4. **Question and Answer Period:** Respond to any questions occurring at this time.
5. **Volunteer-Child Reading Session:** Students will join volunteers for a 15-20 minute one-on-one or small group practice reading session.
6. **Evaluation:** Encourage volunteers to respond in writing to one to three questions such as:

    a. The part of the workshop I benefited from most/least ...
    b. One new thing I learned tonight ...
    c. An addition or change I would make ...
    d. Additional topics I would be interested in ...

Refreshments: This is an optional part of the meeting at the beginning or the end. It allows volunteers to meet one another and have an opportunity to ask questions in an informal atmosphere.

Training Agenda
Encouraging Home Reading
60-90 Minutes
Sample

Purpose: To prepare parents of primary students to encourage home based literacy experiences.

Location: In the school or another community location.

Format: Parents and children are invited to attend together. Children gather in separate room for a story experience for the first part of the session to allow for separate overview and instruction with parents.

Materials: A selection of books pre-selected by the teacher to assure an appropriate reading level. VCR and monitor. Handouts summarizing information presented.

1. **Opening: Introductions and purpose of the meeting.**
2. **Possible topics to include:**

    a. A brief discussion of guidelines for volunteer interactions with readers.
    b. How to introduce a new book.
    c. How to talk about a story.
    d. How to encourage children to respond to what they read.
    e. How to praise.
    f. How to record what the child does.

3. **Video Presentation:** Make a video to demonstrate what the volunteer or parent will be doing.
4. **Question and Answer Period:** Respond to any questions occurring at this time.
5. **Parent-child Reading Session:** Children will join parents for a 15-20 minute practice session. This provides an opportunity for the parent to practice working with a child or a small group while receiving suggestions and assistance in a supportive setting from the trainer.
6. **Evaluation:** Encourage parents to respond in writing to a checklist of three to five questions such as: The part of the workshop I benefited most/least from . . . One new thing I learned tonight . . . An addition or change I would make . . . Additional topics I would be interested in . . . Design the form for easy use - check marks or circling for responses - and leave room for written comments.

[Refreshments: This is an optional part of the evening at the beginning or the end. It allows parents an opportunity to ask questions in an informal atmosphere.]

Training Agenda
Supporting Student Writing Skills
Two 90 Minute Sessions
Sample

Purpose: To prepare parents and volunteers to support student writing development through one-on-one activities.

Location: In the school and where there is lots of table space for work on projects and activities. Usually during the school day unless evening program provides supervised activities for children while they wait for practice sessions.

Materials: Samples of books made by children. Handouts summarizing information presented. Paper. Scissors. Glue. Pencils. Pictures for book making.

Meeting #1

1. **Introductions and purpose of the session.**
2. **Possible topics:**

    a. The developmental process for young writers.
    b. How to use children's art experiences as a springboard for writing.
    c. How to help a child generate or extend a story.
    d. How to help a child write unknown words.
    e. How to re-read what a child has written in order to help the child write more.
    f. How to record a story told by a child.

3. **Video Presentation:** Make a video to demonstrate a volunteer or parent recording a story and assisting a child in writing about a picture, painting, block construction, etc.
4. **Questions and Answers.**
5. Practice taking dictation or assisting a child in writing one or more sentences about an art product.
6. **Evaluation**

Meeting #2

1. **Introductions and purpose of session.**
2. **Possible topics:**

    a. Brief review of Meeting #1.
    b. Value of writing: reciprocity of reading and writing.
    c. How to make books.

3. **Video Presentation:** A video demonstration of volunteer or parent making a book with a child.
4. **Questions and Answers.**
5. **Practice making a book with a child.**
6. **Evaluation.**

[NOTE: Food can be provided at any time during the session.]

Training Agenda
Cross-Age Reading Buddies
40-50 Minutes
Sample

Purpose: To prepare students to be reading buddies (3rd grade and above) and to outline expectations, helpful behaviors, and ways of interacting with the buddies.

Location: In the school.

Materials: Handout of guidelines for students to use when working with their buddies. Books pre-selected by the teacher to be read by the buddy. Guidelines may include such items as suggestions for what to do when the buddy:

- makes a mistake.
- does not know a word.
- is reading too slowly.
- does not understand what he is reading.

1. **Opening: Introductions and purpose of program.**
2. **Possible topics to include:**

    a. Expectations.
    b. Needed behaviors.
    c. Ways to interact.
    d. Ways to encourage independence.

3. **Teacher demonstration with beginning reader while buddies observe.** May also show a video demonstration of a student listening to a younger student read aloud.

4. **Brief question and answer period.**

5. **Buddy Reading Session:** Students will join buddies for a 10 minute reading session. This provides the opportunity for buddies to practice working with their buddies while a teacher observes. Follow up discussion can include any concerns the buddies have.

6. **Follow up Discussion**. Buddies regroup for quick review of logistics, schedules, and materials.

(NOTE: The classroom/reading teacher should arrange several follow-up sessions to give feedback and address any concerns or confusion which might arise.

Volunteers -
You deserve
a BIG
Thank-you
note.

47

Thank
YOU!

48

VIPS

Volunteers in Public Schools
Lancaster City Schools

PRESENTED TO

_____

"If you remember nothing else, remember how thankful we are for your contribution in our schools. You may rest assured that your efforts have not gone unnoticed. You have made our job easier but more importantly, you have touched the lives of our children. We are truly grateful."

John W Baughman
Superintendent

School Principal

President of the Board

Barb Keeshi
Coordinator of Volunteer Services

Date

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